

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 184 268

EC 123 415

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 TITLE Toward a Comprehensive System of Inservice Training in Special Education. A Monograph in Two Sections: I. Issues and Problems in Inservice Education. II. Designing and Implementing Statewide Inservice Training Programs.
 INSTITUTION National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Washington, D.C.; University of Northern Colorado, Greeley.
 PUB DATE Oct 79
 NOTE 51p.
 AVAILABLE FROM National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (\$4.00)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Accountability: *Compliance (Legal); *Disabilities: Elementary, Secondary Education: Federal Legislation: Inservice Education: Needs Assessment; Program Administration: *Program Development; *State Programs: *Statewide Planning
 IDENTIFIERS *Education for All Handicapped Children Act

ABSTRACT

The monograph provides an overview of inservice education issues related to P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act; and considers approaches to designing and implementing statewide inservice training programs. Considered in the first section are the following topics: inservice provisions of P.L. 94-142; the proliferation of innovative practices; the role of inservice in personnel development; and the role of state, university, and local agencies in inservice. Among other issues addressed are accountability, fiscal difficulties, and implications of full or "life" certification. Ambiguities in P.L. 94-142 regulations, manpower distribution trends, and difficulties in relationships among agencies are included in a discussion of problems influencing inservice education. The second section focuses on the design and implementation of inservice training programs. The following aspects are examined (sample subtopics in parentheses): administering statewide inservice (organizing and managing the system); determining inservice needs (motivating participation and establishing inservice priorities); determining optimal systems (identifying and categorizing delivery modes and matching inservice modes to conditions); and evaluating and providing followup. (CL)

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Toward a Comprehensive System of Inservice Training in Special Education

A Monograph in Two Sections:

- I. Issues and Problems in Inservice Education**
 - II. Designing and Implementing Statewide Inservice Training Programs**
-

by Reuben Altman

**Joint Publication of
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
and
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education**

October 1979

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Preface

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Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge George Levin, Director of Special Education, South Dakota Department of Education, for providing funds to help develop this monograph. We also wish to acknowledge members of the NASDSE-HECSE Task Force for contributing to the conceptual framework and providing technical assistance in the preparation of this monograph: Dr. Ed Meyen, University of Kansas; Dr. Jack King, University of Texas; Dr. James Yates, University of Texas; Dr. Patrick O'Donnell, San Francisco State University; Dr. Richard Schofer, University of Missouri; Jerrie Ueberle, Arizona Department of Education; Dr. Ben Harris, University of Texas; Dr. Steve Lillie, University of Illinois; and Dr. William Schipper, Associate Director, NASDSE.

Special thanks are extended to Eileen Lavine, Bethesda, Maryland, for her careful editing and assistance in transmitting the original manuscript into final published form.

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Toward a Comprehensive System Of Inservice Training in Special Education

OVERVIEW

This monograph derives from a collaborative effort between the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the Higher Education Consortium in Special Education (HECSE). Its preparation represents one vehicle through which these professional organizations are responding to the current need for technical assistance in the design and delivery of inservice training in special education.

The urgency of the requirements for statewide comprehensive inservice plans suggests the desirability of step-by-step guidelines representing an assumed professional consensus. However, no such consensus exists or is likely to evolve. The heterogeneous conditions which influence the nature of comprehensive inservice planning argue against adapting or even encouraging any singular approach. Consequently this publication is not intended to be a "cookbook" for inservice education. It is intended to enhance and stimulate thinking rather than impose ideas about the design of inservice training models.

This document is intended to foster creative responses by professionals in each of the agencies cooperating to meet the degree of comprehensiveness intended by the inservice provisions of P.L. 94-142 and applicable state laws. If statewide inservice delivery models are influenced in imaginative and effective ways, then the purpose of this publication will have been achieved.

At the same time, this guide is

intended to be sufficiently substantive to enable the reader to utilize its recommendations in designing and implementing a workable inservice training plan. As a final product, it represents a composite of ideas and practices distilled from the vantage points of both regular and special education. Further, it draws in its preparation upon professional expertise from within a number of state education agencies (SEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and local education agencies (LEAs).

Chapter I communicates the rationale underlying the preparation of the monograph and the considerations which account for the decision to produce a volume at this time with an exclusive focus on inservice training. The chapter is organized around a number of underlying issues pertaining to the status of inservice training in education today, both those relating directly to inservice education as well as those tangential concerns which only bear implications for inservice needs.

Chapter I also addresses problems and precedents that tend to serve as impediments to effecting progressive change in the organization and delivery of inservice training. We anticipate that the process of subjecting these issues to candid examination will facilitate the cooperation necessary for statewide inservice planning. In addition, the open examination of biasing factors, such as individual agency perspectives, should provide an opportunity to begin to resolve conflicting viewpoints.

Chapter II focuses on the design and implementation of inservice training programs. The chapter first presents in logical sequence the variety of components constituting a comprehensive inservice effort, ranging from needs assessment to program evaluation and follow-up. An ongoing program of inservice training is by its very nature continuous and cyclical. The process, for example, of evaluating the effectiveness of any inservice program is simultaneously contributing to an ongoing needs

assessment by identifying further areas of deficiency.

Chapter II describes each component and its relationship to other components in the total process. In addition, a variety of practices are presented which suggest alternative means of implementing the inservice components. Approaches recommended probably will require modification and adaptation to local situations and conditions.

I . Issues and Problems in Inservice Education

A number of issues bear directly on the need for and direction of inservice training today. Each of the following four points is discussed in detail below:

- (1) Inservice provisions of P.L. 94-142;
- (2) Proliferation of knowledge and innovative practices in education;
- (3) The relatively low priority generally afforded inservice training; and
- (4) Conflicting views of responsibility for inservice among the agencies involved.

INSERVICE PROVISIONS OF P.L.94-142

On August 23, 1977, the Federal Register reported the rules and regulations supporting the implementation of P.L. 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act. One major feature of this regulatory document is the requirement that each state incorporate within its mandated Annual Program Plan a description of programs and procedures for the development and implementation of a comprehensive system of personnel development. The overall scope of this system has an impact on both general and special education and on both preservice and inservice training.

Concerning inservice training in particular, section 121a.382e specifies,

"Each annual program plan must provide that the State educational

agency insures that ongoing inservice training programs are available to all personnel who are engaged in the education of handicapped children...."

Requirements for the organization of such comprehensive inservice programs include needs assessments; selection of incentives motivating participation; the use of innovative practices; identification of target populations; and the specification of inservice content, procedures, sources of funding, and evaluation plans. The procedural details for carrying out these and other program components of the desired comprehensive program of inservice training remain the prerogative of each SEA. However, the regulations specify that the SEA must provide the state's institutions of higher education and other interested advocacy organizations with the opportunity to participate in the developmental processes.

PROLIFERATION OF INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Education in general and special education in particular are currently experiencing an unprecedented degree of change in both knowledge and practice. A number of factors have contributed to and appear likely to promote continuing innovation in educational philosophy and methodology. Among these are the emerging advocacy role of parents and other concerned individuals, continued availability of federal funds to support innovation, progress in federal and state legislation, and the increasing number of relevant litigations.

The rapidity of change in education serves to create a gap between administrators in decision-making positions and practitioners charged with responsibility for implementation. Such a gap is inevitable and does not in itself constitute a problem that necessarily should be remediated. In fact, a tolerable disparity between what we know should be occurring and what we know in fact occurs attests to a progressive and professionally healthy search for new and better practices. Furthermore, a reasonable period of transition between the formation of policy and its implementation helps guard against rash or misguided educational practices. Clearly, however, if left unchecked, this gap could broaden to a deleterious degree.

THE ROLE OF INSERVICE IN PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Another general purpose motivating the preparation of this document is the desire of the sponsoring agencies to encourage the recognition of inservice training as an integral aspect of personnel preparation in education. Neither the acknowledgment of the need nor the actual delivery of inservice training to regular or special educators is new. Indeed the relevant mandatory provisions of recent federal legislation are more catalytic than generative. Inservice training in education is historically rooted and is a commonplace occurrence in most school districts throughout the United States. In addition, a variety of somewhat effective though often simplistically implemented inservice models have evolved (e.g., workshops and extension courses).

Nevertheless, professional education has remained unconscionably passive about inservice education compared to such comparably critical disciplines as medicine. Continuing education must now receive more than lip service and must become fully accepted as an ongoing and integral aspect of professional training in education. We can no longer view inservice as an occasional or even frequent after-school activity which hopefully enhances the effectiveness of its recipients. Teacher trainers in colleges and universities must begin at the pre-service level to communicate the expectation of continuing education as an ongoing career-related responsibility for all educational personnel.

AGENCY DOMAINS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSERVICE

The magnitude of the comprehensive system of personnel development required by P.L. 94-142 undoubtedly will tax the already limited resources available within any particular state. Even prior to the passage of P.L. 94-142, special education administrators in SEAs, IHEs, and LEAs were unanimous in pointing out how growth in the degree and nature of special education programming would impose on resources. Local school districts are faced with a greater heterogeneity of handicapped pupils in need of special educational and related services. Such factors as the emergence of preschool programs, the deinstitutionalization movement, the mainstreaming trend, and parental activism, as well as litigation and legislation in numerous states, have contributed to the widespread strain on LEA personnel and material resources.

Similarly, the IHEs have sought greater financial assistance from federal, state, and private sector sources to cope with the analogous demands in personnel preparation. In the early 1970s, colleges and universities trained personnel for new and innovative service delivery models, such as those necessary to deal with the growing tendency to retain mildly handicapped pupils in regular educational settings. At the same time, IHEs were beginning to train a more diverse cadre of personnel, such as paraprofessionals and community-based teachers. Paraprofessionals were trained to meet the growth in public school programs for the multiple and severely handicapped, while community-based teachers grew out of increased parent involvement in special education programs and the concomitant need for parent training programs.

In addition, IHEs felt pressed to train personnel competent to serve heretofore unserved pupils (e.g., early childhood handicapped, severely handicapped, and newly organized cross-categorical groups labeled mildly handicapped). IHEs thus generally find themselves training greater numbers of personnel to fill more diverse and complex service delivery roles for more varied pupil populations.

This state of affairs has a parallel in each SEA. The same factors and consequences brought to bear on LEAs and IHEs have compounded the demands on SEA resources. As innovative service models evolve and new pupil populations are served, so the regulatory functions of SEA personnel expand in scope and complexity. New certification areas and such alternatives as competency-based endorsement, as well as the

ever-increasing numbers of rules and regulations to monitor, find most SEAs considerably understaffed.

Yet in seeming contradiction to this professed and accurate picture of understaffed and overburdened agencies, each appears to aggressively pursue a greater share of responsibility for implementing the inservice provisions of P.L. 94-142. A variety of old and some new arguments have been raised to support each agency's perceptions of its own and the other's domains of responsibility.

The SEAs as the direct recipients of P.L. 94-142 inservice funds point to their responsibility to assure accountability and quality control in expenditure of these funds. Whether or not this implies questions of competence in regard to IHEs and LEAs or merely desire to retain control of the funds involved, there is a growing tendency for SEA personnel to assume responsibility themselves for the delivery of inservice training.

Colleges and universities point to their historic "right" and traditional role in personnel preparation. The IHEs are by definition training institutions and are staffed largely by individuals who were themselves trained specifically to prepare teachers and other school personnel. The LEAs in turn argue for their own inservice programs by claiming large numbers of poorly trained teachers certified by IHEs and SEAs. Perhaps their more compelling argument is that inservice is delivered most effectively by in-house staff who can tailor the training more closely to individual local needs.

There is merit to each position, and at the same time no evidence exists to support unequivocally any one

type of institution as the most effective in inservice training. Without intending to either minimize the issue or resort to a platitude for its solution, the fact remains that the task is massive enough to require the energies of all three types of agencies. Even more significantly, the qualifications and capabilities of the personnel preparing and delivering inservice are far more important than the particular agency the individual may represent.

Other Issues Bearing on Inservice Education

A number of other factors operating in contemporary education, independent of legislative thrusts and current trends in special education, further stimulate the need for this monograph. These issues include:

- Demands for accountability in public education;
- Diminishing financial resources;
- Implications of "life" certification; and
- Enrollment trends in higher education.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

The demand in recent years for greater accountability in public education can be traced primarily to a decrease in financial resources, a general decline in the public's view of education and professional educators, and the widespread distribution of data suggesting that education is becoming increasingly inept. Consistent annual declines on such indices as the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Graduate Record Examination scores seem evidence of

the latter accusation. Similarly, the observation that a greater percentage of college freshmen are less well prepared in fundamental language and mathematics skills to progress satisfactorily in college also seems to attest to the failure of public education to meet its basic responsibility.

Education advocates offer credible explanations for these trends (which latest reports suggest are subsiding if not actually reversing), including the fact that a disproportionately greater number of college applicants and enrollees are from groups which have traditionally scored lower on standardized aptitude and achievement indices (e.g., members of various minority groups, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and those from culturally diverse and bilingual homes). Nevertheless, the general public and many within the education community itself interpret such statistical trends in terms of the need for greater accountability in education.

The so-called accountability movement has manifest itself in a number of ways, some of which bear implications for inservice education. The ultimate index of success in education is demonstrable student gains in academics and such relevant nonacademic areas as social skills and vocational preparedness. Inservice training represents the major vehicle through which both the importance of documentation itself and the technology for documenting student growth can be disseminated to inservice educators.

Increasing public suspicion concerning the skills of educators demands that inservice personnel at all levels not only be more accountable,

but also that they systematically undertake procedures for documenting their instructional efforts and the effect of these efforts on student performance. For special educators and other school personnel involved in the education of handicapped students, the Individualized Education Program mandated by P.L. 94-142 offers one mechanism for fostering and documenting accountability. It is through widespread and aggressive continuing education efforts that IEP procedures can be communicated most efficiently to inservice personnel.

DIMINISHING FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Decreasing financial support of education is being felt at all levels from preschool through higher and graduate education. Factors contributing to this financial crisis include inflation, cutbacks in education budgets by State legislatures, and the failure of the public to approve tax levies and bond issues in support of public schools. Such limitations in financial resources translate directly into reductions in programs, personnel, and materials. Public school teachers and administrators find themselves dealing with the dilemma resulting from simultaneous demands for greater accountability on lower budgets.

An increasingly common current response to these financial restraints is the trimming of so-called educational fringes which typically include experimental programs, elective courses, extracurricular activities, support personnel, and curriculum areas considered less essential. In fact, financial considerations combined with the accountability issue appear to have produced the current "back-to-basics" movement.

This trend is marked by concentrated effort devoted to the presumed elemental skills underlying functional success in reading, writing, and arithmetic and is now in evidence at all levels of education. Some elementary schools are delineating levels of competency to be mastered by students as a prerequisite to promotion. High schools are making increased use of tests of basic skills as criteria for graduation. Analogously, colleges and universities are reporting curriculum revisions that entail remedial coursework for more students and increased credit hours for general education requirements typified by courses in literature, composition, humanities, foreign language, and basic math and science.

Clearly, in times of financial stress all school programs including those for special education students are jeopardized. Increased dollars are available to special education through P.L. 94-142, but there is a possibility of misuse of these funds. It is feasible for LEAs, IHEs, and SEAs to look at 94-142 funds as a vehicle for offsetting budget cuts elsewhere. For example, an agency may shift an individual's responsibility from a low priority program to a special education role, even when the person is not prepared for responsibilities in special education. While skills and abilities of all personnel can be upgraded through inservice training, only thorough and comprehensive programs can prepare competent professionals. Each public and private agency involved and the SEA in particular must monitor 94-142 expenditures and guard against such potential misuse of special education funds.

IMPLICATIONS OF LIFE CERTIFICATION

The traditional vehicle through which both regular and special education teachers have received licensure is completion of a predetermined series of courses at an approved institution of higher education. The relatively sudden and rapidly evolving demand for special education teachers during the past two decades has resulted in the adoption of provisional standards or temporary certification by virtually all SEAs. Recently, with the increased availability of specially trained personnel, more sophisticated preservice training programs, and concerns regarding the quality of service delivery, some states have eliminated such provisional teaching standards. It would appear that the standards for personnel qualifications suggested in P.L. 94-142 imply at least fully certified teachers of special education.

Nevertheless, the course and/or competency requirements for full or "life" certification by most SEAs and many IHEs typically represent what most teacher trainers would consider minimal professional standards. While institutions of higher education often are independent certifying agencies, many adopt the "minimal" SEA qualifications as certification standards. Relatively few IHEs have sufficient financial and manpower resources or the professional motivation to exceed minimal standards and offer the additional training experiences we know are often needed. Regardless of the range or depth of preservice training, or even the quality of demonstrated teaching experience, the issuance of a "life" certification remains a significant problem.

Some states have progressed toward the elimination of nonrenewable certifications. Any systematic model of quality inservice training can assure the continuing education of teaching and other educational personnel and simultaneously serve as a basis for periodic recertification. The universal adoption of renewable certification is essential in light of the rapid changes occurring in contemporary education practices.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Full-time undergraduate college and university enrollment has generally declined over the past several years, and predictions based on population trends suggest continuing declines in future enrollments. Special education, like other college training programs, has experienced a share of this decline. Some universities have voluntarily phased out their undergraduate teacher training programs, preferring to concentrate their resources on graduate level education.

Regardless of the cause of this on-campus enrollment decline, the result may produce an increase in resources available for inservice as opposed to preservice training. *In fact, colleges and universities should be devoting a greater proportion of their resources to inservice training.* The conditions discussed throughout this Chapter, together with enrollment trends, strongly support the retraining and upgrading of existing school personnel in addition to producing new personnel. Relevant here are the oversupply of teachers in some geographic areas in both regular and special education, emerging indirect

service models, and the value of capitalizing on prior teaching experience. *Faculty in colleges and universities will be required to overcome professional inertia and general resistance to change in re-conceptualizing their roles in relation to inservice responsibilities.*

Problems Influencing Inservice Education

A group of special concerns have stymied efforts toward the realization of comprehensive programs of inservice training. These problems are rooted in historic and contemporary procedures and philosophies that have become integral to the operation of our state's educational and institutional agencies.

Because it is apparent that inservice programming can achieve maximum success only through the cooperation of these agencies, several counter-productive issues are raised here. The goal of this discussion is to augment solutions to these problems by encouraging open dialogue about the conflicts involved.

The problems discussed here include:

- (1) Ambiguities in P.L. 94-142 Rules and Regulations;
- (2) Current trends in manpower distribution;
- (3) Competition among institutions of higher education;
- (4) Changing role of state education agencies;

- (5) History of communications between agencies;
- (6) Complexity of the inservice mission; and
- (7) Conflicting interests among agencies.

AMBIGUITIES IN 94-142 REGULATIONS

Few documents in the history of special education have received as much critical scrutiny as the Rules and Regulations for P.L. 94-142. Agencies and interest groups concerned with education of the handicapped expressed some degree of discontent about provisions in draft versions. Perhaps the most consistently voiced objection related to the lack of precision in regard to procedures.

A premise of this publication is that the lack of procedural specificity is inevitable, primarily because of the time constraints involved, and more importantly that it is an asset because highly specific procedural guidelines would be inhibiting and limiting. It is laudable, in terms of both soundness and practicality, that a considerable range of activities can serve effectively to fulfill the specified provisions.

The purpose here is to highlight provisions of P.L. 94-142 dealing with inservice education which may appear ambiguous or unclear. It should be noted first that the inservice training specifications are just one aspect of a mandated overall comprehensive system of personnel development. In turn, this comprehensive system is one required component of each state's Annual Program Plan, which calls for a description of the programs and

procedures ongoing as well as those to be implemented during the year.

Definition: Inservice training is defined in the regulations as "any training other than that received by an individual in a full-time program which leads to a degree." This definition does not preclude an individual from receiving credit toward a degree through inservice participation nor does it limit the inservice recipient to part-time school enrollment (e.g., a volunteer aide may simultaneously be enrolled in a full-time program and be working toward a graduate or undergraduate degree).

Target Population: The rules and regulations specify the inservice target population as both general and special education personnel, including those in instruction, administration, related services, and support services. Thus, all individuals engaged or likely to become engaged (such as regular classroom teachers not yet serving handicapped students) either directly or indirectly in the education of handicapped students (including paraprofessionals, parents, and volunteers) are intended recipients of inservice training.

Dissemination: The inservice training plan itself may incorporate at least partially the requirement that each state establish and report procedures for acquiring, reviewing, and disseminating significant knowledge and practices. *Such dissemination efforts are potentially one major form of inservice training.* The Annual Program Plan must describe a statewide mechanism for adopting promising educational practices as demonstrated through research, for disseminating such information, and

for developing and modifying instructional materials.

What constitutes significant information or practices of sufficient promise to merit dissemination must be decided on an individual basis in light of state and local needs. The state's Annual Program Plan, and more specifically its comprehensive system of personnel development, must include a description of both the decision-making and delivery processes. Since the intent of this dissemination/training activity is to adopt appropriate desirable practices, the procedures specified for identifying and examining such information should reflect a degree of objectivity.

Needs Assessment: The regulations call specifically for two needs assessments. First, the SEA must determine annually the numbers of new and retrained personnel needed to insure that sufficient and qualified staffs are available. What defines "sufficient" will vary from state to state according to caseloads and numbers of children identified as eligible for services. Similarly, what is meant by "qualified" will depend on certification requirements and/or competency criteria.

The second needs assessment process required will serve as the basis for determining the content areas of inservice and their relative priority. Both the content area and the "nature of training for each area" must be provided, including description of the providers of training, the funding sources, and the time frame to be followed.

Participation: This personnel development plan also must spell out the nature and extent of participation

by the SEA itself, the state's LEAs and IHEs, and other pertinent organizations and agencies (e.g., parent groups and organizations of handicapped individuals themselves). The particular nature and extent of this involvement may vary, but it should provide "an opportunity to participate fully." Such participation refers to both the development and the conduct of the personnel development system.

In addition, the regulations require local staff involvement and the use of incentives to motivate trainee participation. These may range from monetary inducements to mandatory certification renewal requirements. The nature and extent of involvement by local staff is not spelled out. But the Annual Program Plan itself is expected to identify the human and material resources at the local, state, and regional levels expected to assist in the personnel preparation program. Thus, the data necessary to propose a plan showing appropriate participation will be at hand.

Technical Assistance: At the same time, the state is expected to include a description of the technical assistance it provides to LEAs to enable implementation of the personnel development system. Of particular relevance here is the state's option to enter into contracts with IHEs and other appropriate agencies to carry out the various components of this system.

Finally, the regulations call for an effective plan of evaluation, covering both the extent to which the program's objectives are met and the quality of the procedures for administering and monitoring the system.

Like most regulatory material of this nature, the 94-142 Regulations offer considerable latitude in interpreting meaning and intent. All too frequently the pressures under which we strive to implement such far-reaching programs find us endeavoring to circumvent one or more of the responsibilities involved. It is likely that the greatest efficiency and success in implementing the inservice provisions of 94-142 will come with a direct and earnest effort at compliance by all individuals and agencies involved. *The "ambiguity" in the regulations should be embraced as enabling desirable individual differences in procedures rather than as an excuse to avoid aggressive and responsible action.*

TRENDS IN MANPOWER DISTRIBUTION

The difficulties relating to manpower distribution fall primarily into two categories: (a) the oversupply/undersupply of certain types of personnel, and (b) the oversupply/undersupply of personnel in some geographic areas.

The first distribution problem is caused largely by the number of pre-service teacher training programs preparing personnel in certain areas of special education without considering the demand for teachers in those fields. A disproportionately high number of colleges and universities, for example, annually turn out teachers certified in the area of "educable mental retardation." The resulting excess of EMR teachers is compounded further by the current trend toward maintaining such mildly handicapped youngsters in regular classroom settings. *Consequently, we have a proliferation of personnel qualified for teaching positions that are simultaneously becoming more scarce.*

Conversely, relatively few colleges or universities are initiating training programs to prepare personnel capable of meeting the demands of the alternative service models evolving in local school districts. Under the legislated mandate that handicapped pupils be educated in the least restrictive environment, we find an increasing number of handicapped children and youth, placed full-time in regular education. The predicament of handicapped youngsters requiring services while placed full-time in regular classrooms may be handled most efficaciously by the availability of indirect service personnel, such as consultant teachers.

Such teachers would be particularly valuable during this period in which concerted efforts are just beginning to train regular education personnel with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully integrate mildly handicapped youngsters into their classrooms. Consulting teachers enable regular classroom teachers to serve handicapped youngsters directly, through consultation in such relevant areas as curricular, instructional, and materials modification. Yet personnel for such innovative service delivery models are typically prepared only under the auspices of special training projects funded specifically for that purpose. Few training programs respond independently of external financial support.

This state of affairs bears at least two major implications for inservice education. First, *regular education personnel themselves, in particular classroom teachers, must have immediate and high priority for inservice training in special education.* As we enable them to work effectively with more heterogeneous pupil populations, they will be less dependent on the indirect service

personnel, who are yet to be trained in adequate numbers. Second, to the extent that we continue to need additional special education personnel, whether to fulfill newly evolved service models or traditional models with new populations, such as early childhood, then *inservice retraining of capable individuals now working in oversupplied areas becomes desirable to meet these new supply needs.*

The supply problems related to geographic distribution are quite different, but they are at least partially subject to remedy through inservice training. The problem here concerns the attractiveness of urban vs. rural living for the cadres of young professionals being trained by our colleges and universities. Each crop of new graduates exhibits the same preference for urban life, with most graduates competing for positions in urban communities.

This puts the urban school districts in a position to select the most capable of an oversupply of applicants, while rural school districts experience difficulty filling available positions. The inability of rural districts to attract large numbers of highly qualified administrative and teaching applicants from which to select their personnel magnifies their need for continuing inservice training on new developments and techniques related to education of the handicapped.

But other types of problems surface in the urban settings. Frequently, newly trained teachers who themselves were raised and schooled (through student teaching practicums) in rural and suburban areas find themselves inadequately prepared to work with inner-city and other urban pupil populations. Those skills and knowledge areas of particular value in

urban settings can be gained on the job through daily experience and structured inservice training. Whether the source of this inservice is an urban-based IHE or the LEA itself is not as important as the need for adequate inservice preparation.

COMPETITION AMONG INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

A number of public and private IHEs within a state conduct training programs to prepare personnel for positions in special education. These colleges and universities vary along a number of predictable dimensions: some are large and some are small; some draw students from a circumscribed region while others draw nationwide; some claim nationally recognized faculty and some boast their practicum sites; some invest their energies exclusively in teacher training, and others perceive a broader mission including research and demonstration; some serve only undergraduate students, and others include or limit their programs to post-baccalaureate programs; and some possess relatively better financial and material resources than others. In fact, the maxim, "the rich get richer," is as applicable to higher education as it is to other sectors of society.

These positive correlations between qualitative variables among IHEs are neither accidental nor coincidental. An IHE with the reputation and resources enabling it to attract high caliber faculty and students will more likely be in a position to grow and generate additional resources. Of course, some degree of fluctuation occurs, and institutions considered outstanding at one time may fall in status due to changes in leadership, turnover in faculty, diminished resources, and other less

tangible variables. Similarly, less well recognized institutions may emerge as major training sites following periods of aggressive faculty recruitment and dedication to resource acquisition (e.g., through grant applications and emphasis on faculty teaching, research, and service).

These distinctions do not necessarily discredit the quality of faculty or programs at smaller colleges and universities. The more resourceful IHEs generally will prove more capable in establishing innovative training programs and in being responsive to changing priorities in personnel preparation. *Nevertheless, colleges and universities typically duplicate each other's training programs without regard for the realities.*

This situation is typified by the rapid growth of teacher training programs in the area of severely handicapped when not many credible teacher trainers were even available in this field. In addition, the low incidence of severely handicapped students should have argued against any but a few highly specialized training programs. Few states can justify more than one training program in the area of severely handicapped based on personnel demand.

Needless to say, we can anticipate the same competitive behavior between IHEs on the initiation of inservice training programs as support funds become available. The potential exists for avoiding this problem if SEAs exert statewide leadership in inservice activities in relation to P.L. 94-142, and colleges and universities pursue inservice responsibilities only to the degree that their resources are adequate and suitable.

In some cases, difficult decisions possibly entailing loss of funds may have to be made as colleges and universities strive for self-evaluation enabling program decisions on objective criteria. It is conceivable that in some states, the network of smaller colleges and universities may accommodate increased inservice responsibilities more easily than the larger institutions that are already burdened with more students and programs. In any case, the obligation to inservice training is too important for the SEA to distribute responsibilities around the state indiscriminately independent of criteria evidencing high quality and cost effectiveness.

CHANGING ROLE OF THE STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

The passage of P.L. 94-142 and the appropriation of large amounts of money for its implementation suggest some new implications and responsibilities for the nation's SEAs. Historically, the primary responsibilities of special education staff within SEAs have been regulatory in nature. That is, the major percentage of SEA staff time has been devoted to disseminating information to LEAs regarding applicable special education standards and regulations and to monitoring their implementation (in essence, a limited statewide program of inservice training).

Approximately three-quarters of the funds allocated annually under 94-142 will be passed on by the SEA to the state's other educational agencies in meeting the provisions of 94-142. The remaining funds are retained by the SEA to cover the administrative costs involved. These enabling funds, as well as the extensive responsibilities delegated to the state in the design and implementation of the

Annual Program Plan, thrust the SEA into an increased position of leadership.

This picture is in contrast to past experience, which generally has found SEAs the more insulated of agencies in comparison to LEAs and IHEs. Some more influential school districts as well as universities have at times philosophically and programmatically intimidated SEA personnel. The magnitude of P.L. 94-142 and the pervading emphasis on statewide planning demand a greater degree of responsibility from within the SEA. *The SEA is in a singularly unique position in the state to provide the unifying force and leadership needed to realize statewide comprehensive inservice programming.*

This changing role for many SEAs will evolve over time and must be marked by a considerable degree of sensitivity to existing interagency dynamics. In those states with large independent school districts and relatively autonomous major university programs in special education, the assertion of leadership within a milieu of cooperation will be particularly difficult to achieve.

In some cases, new hiring practices will be necessary with SEAs competing more vigorously for the talent and leadership frequently attracted to university settings. More SEA positions currently are filled from the ranks of LEA administrative personnel, whose background is more compatible with SEA role expectations. Attracting personnel for SEA positions who can draw together competing and often conflicting interests effectively will require more diversified hiring practices and criteria, a relaxation of bureaucratic rigidity, and the integration of opportunities

for professional growth, including support of staff research and scholarship.

HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AGENCIES

Despite the fact that a state's IHEs, LEAs, and SEA are integrally related and interdependent by their very purpose, relatively little dialogue occurs between them. Some progress toward alleviating this communication gap has occurred recently, due to the efforts of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped involving intrastate manpower planning. The 1974 BEH directive indicated that in order to receive funds in support of various training programs, agencies had to demonstrate statewide cooperative planning intended to maximize the cost effectiveness of federal funds allocated for personnel preparation in special education.

In further support of this objective, BEH has funded a national technical assistance project to assist states in overcoming impediments toward cooperative manpower planning in special education. Most states have responded thus far with the formation of committees comprised of representatives of the various agencies and training projects funded by BEH. While these committees convene periodically, there is little evidence that agencies have made major strides toward deriving programming decisions from the processes of negotiation and compromise which such organizations theoretically could achieve.

Nevertheless, probably no preferable vehicle currently exists in any state through which to pursue the ongoing communication and agency cooperation vital to the inservice provisions of P.L. 94-142. Where

necessary, the state manpower planning committee should be broadened to include greater representation by the LEA and the other advocacy agencies and organizations specified in the regulations as eligible to participate in the development of the state's comprehensive system of personnel preparation.

COMPLEXITY OF THE INSERVICE MISSION

As noted earlier, the Rules and Regulations guiding implementation of P.L. 94-142 specify the target populations for inservice as instructional, administrative, related services, and support personnel in both regular and special education. Included are aides, paraprofessionals, natural and surrogate parents, and volunteers. This highly heterogeneous target population is but one variable which dramatizes the complexity of the inservice task.

The individual whose background of training and experience is in general education clearly does not manifest the same inservice needs as an experienced special educator who has recently earned an advanced degree. Similarly, while certainly overlap exists in terms of content to be communicated, the inservice message to administrative staff does not entirely coincide with the inservice needs of instructional or support personnel. There are both common and mutually exclusive domains of knowledge and practice which must be directed to each of the many subgroups comprising the overall inservice target population.

Not only will the content of inservice vary according to the particular audience, but so too will the mechanisms through which inservice is delivered. The inservice vehicles

which will ultimately prove most beneficial to instructional staffs will not necessarily meet the distinct needs of administrative and/or ancillary personnel. The more highly educated and experienced personnel may require different inservice models than those which best meet the more basic needs of volunteers and paraprofessionals.

A host of other variables will similarly prove influential and must be considered in designing truly comprehensive inservice plans. Mechanisms which prove effective in rural areas may be inefficient in more densely populated cities. Inservice on instructional methods within an LEA having considerable financial and material resources will necessarily vary from inservice in LEAs where resources are scarce. *This complexity clearly reinforces the notion that no single approach to inservice training can conceivably meet statewide needs.* In fact, the state plans which ultimately evolve preferably would be marked by a flexibility that enables rapid adaptation of inservice content and procedures to local conditions and varying target groups.

CONFLICTING INTERESTS AMONG AGENCIES

In any situation where a decision-making process must occur among interrelated social institutions such as SEAs, local school districts, and colleges and universities, the potential exists for conflicting interests to influence that decision-making process. For example, in some states a particular IHE may have trained a disproportionately high percentage of the SEA staff. First there is the more obvious difficulty of a symbiotic relationship evolving between the SEA and a

particular IHE. Less obvious is the possibility under these circumstances of the SEA developing a closer working relationship with one IHE simply because of the greater familiarity with that faculty and its resources.

Where the issue is one of the development and implementation of a statewide program encompassing all educational personnel, such biasing influences should be guarded against. Certainly in some situations a particular IHE's faculty may be more appropriately qualified for a certain inservice mission, but the criteria in any case should be objective and public.

Along the same lines, special working relationships have evolved between specific IHEs and LEAs. Sometimes these cooperative working relationships are qualitatively derived and are mutually and maximally beneficial to the agencies involved. In other situations, these relationships are determined by less relevant variables such as compatibility of personalities or the expediency of geographic proximity. Again, objective professional criteria must be discerned and used in matching providers of inservice training with receiving agencies.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has summarized the major issues and problems related to establishing comprehensive statewide inservice training programs in compliance with P.L. 94-142 requirements. Chapter II discusses the delegation of responsibilities among the agencies involved, design features of various program components, needs assessments, program administration, inservice evaluation, and follow-up.

II. Designing and Implementing Statewide Inservice Training Programs

Introduction

This chapter is intended as a resource for planning, implementing, and carrying out inservice programs in special education. It is written from the standpoint that personnel representing each of the three major agencies concerned (i.e., SEAs, LEAs, and IHEs) will pursue quality programs of inservice training cooperatively and with equal commitment. The previous chapter shared some of the concerns and perspectives of these agencies. By opening those issues up to public airing and discussion, it is less likely that they will undermine the cooperation necessary to achieve statewide inservice programming.

Above all, we must avoid the temptation to view the current growth in inservice training as a basis for competition between agencies. Such potential does exist whenever sources of funding and professional domains are at stake. As educators experiencing an unprecedented opportunity to serve handicapped children and youth under the provisions of P.L. 94-142, we can meet the tremendous inservice needs most effectively through mutual support and purpose.

Obviously no SEA, LEA, or IHE can by itself fulfill the inservice provisions under P.L. 94-142. To achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness on a statewide basis will require an unfettered melding of resources of these agencies with other state, national, and local resources. Even with such concentration of effort, the task will be continuous and it will likely take several years for each state to adapt comfortably to

inservice mechanisms that ultimately evolve. In fact, it is probably such logistical considerations that initially will prove most difficult as agencies which historically have functioned fairly independently will be required to negotiate and compromise.

Just as we must recognize that no individual agency can meet this responsibility without the support and assistance of the others, so we must also acknowledge that each of the agencies has unique strengths and vantage points which should translate into an optimal statewide program of inservice training for all educational personnel. It would be both foolish and counterproductive to ignore the very nature, available resources, professional expertise, and history of performance associated with any of the agencies involved. What defines the nature, resources, expertise, and history of one SEA, for example, is not necessarily perfectly analogous to an SEA in another section of the nation or even in a neighboring state. The same observation would hold for LEAs and IHEs both within and between states.

However, the relevant structural and service commonalities among related agencies far outweigh their idiosyncracies. The primary responsibility of the LEA is the education and training of children and youth; the primary responsibility of the IHE is the preparation of personnel; and the primary responsibility of the SEA is administrative and regulatory.

We are not suggesting that this document will endeavor to dictate agency roles in the inservice mission. Such a blueprint approach would be antithetical to the philosophy underlying the preparation of this monograph. Our goal here is to stimulate thinking, encourage experimentation, and foster cooperation in statewide inservice training. It is to further these aims that we view each component of an overall inservice training program as falling under the general auspices of a particular agency.

Given the nature, resources, expertise, and history of the SEA, we would anticipate the regulatory functions relating to the statewide inservice training under P.L. 94-142 to fall under the SEA domain. This is not to imply that only regulatory functions would logically be met by SEA personnel. Nor does it imply that every component involving regulation or organization must be handled by the SEA. Ultimately, the particular decisions must be made within each state where the nature, resources, expertise, and history of each participating agency is best known. It is hoped that this monograph can assist and guide each state in achieving this objective.

A Single Model Approach

At this point, a flowchart or some comparable graphic representation highlighting time sequences of the components of a statewide inservice training program might have ideally revealed their order and interrelationships, and suggest the specific agency under whose auspices the particular components fall. Unfortunately, such an approach would be misleading if not inaccurate from a number of perspectives.

First, we would be dealing with an oversimplified version of what realistically takes place to achieve any system as complex as an ongoing comprehensive program of statewide training. While some components would logically precede others (e.g., needs assessment prior to implementation), most components will actually be ongoing and mutually influencing. The very process of delivering inservice training, for example, will have an impact on the recipients and change the nature of their needs. Thus needs must be assessed continually with the results reflected in inservice preparation and delivery rather than viewed as a discrete process occurring and completed at some point in time.

Further complicating the relationships between program components is the fact that field conditions are never static. We continually experience changes in personnel; in educational technology, methodology, and philosophy; in service delivery models; in organizational and administrative patterns, and in pupil populations. These and other factors may influence the need for and nature of inservice training. Furthermore, the presentation of any particular model would suggest a standard and thereby encourage conformity in approach. Conditions pertinent to inservice education both within and between states are far too divergent to make any single system or model credible for adoption nationwide.

Finally, no single approach should be recommended for adoption because we do not yet have the definitive applicable knowledge base. While numerous inservice efforts continue to report varying degrees of success or failure in meeting inservice objectives, we have still to identify

the conditions within any particular setting to which may be attributed the relative success of that program. This makes it virtually impossible to transport a proven inservice program from one site to another with any degree of confidence. Analogously, an inservice effort that may appear unsuccessful at one location may merely be more suited to an alternative site and thus give evidence of successful results when adapted elsewhere.

This section of the chapter should not be interpreted to imply a pessimistic attitude toward model building in inservice education. Systematic models of inservice training would be a desired end product supported by this monograph. Our point is that the nature of these models must evolve independently in each state. The intent here is to provide a resource that will facilitate the development of inservice training programs through ideas and procedures that may be adapted, modified, and/or built upon in concert with local conditions. Ultimately, success in statewide comprehensive inservice training will occur through trial and error, and over time with more trials and fewer errors.

Inservice Program Components

This section presents a global overview in outline form of the remainder of the chapter. It is comprised of four major sections subdivided into eleven subsections. The organizational format is based on the procedures that must occur in order to create an ongoing statewide comprehensive inservice program. The components of inservice programs are analyzed and elaborated upon in the narrative.

The sequence used in presenting the components follows a logical order of events beginning with organizational considerations and proceeding to evaluation and follow-up activities. This order does not necessarily imply a lock-step sequence of activities, since most inservice program components will be continuous and overlapping. For example, considerable time, energy, and expense would be lost if evaluation efforts were deferred until all other program components were operational. Evaluative, administrative, and other components bearing on the overall quality of the program supercede sequential considerations and are thus ongoing. But for purposes of clarity in presentation and communication, the following sequences of topics appears most useful.

Administering Statewide Inservice

Organizing the System

Managing the System

Determining Inservice Needs

Motivating Participation

Conducting Needs Assessment

Establishing Inservice Priorities

Determining Optimal Systems

Identifying and Categorizing
Delivery Vehicles

Matching Inservice Vehicles
to Conditions

Evolving Innovative Systems

Evaluation and Follow-Up

Monitoring Qualitative Features

Conducting Evaluation

Maintaining Continuity in Inservice

ADMINISTERING STATEWIDE INSERVICE

The administration of a statewide system of inservice training is comprised of two broad responsibilities:

- (1) organizing the system; and
- (2) managing the system.

Each of these major responsibilities in turn encompass two subcomponents of an organizational and managerial nature. The two subcomponents associated with system organization are:

- the formation of a decision-making body, and
- the enhancement of communication and cooperation among the agencies and individuals concerned.

Similarly, the two subcomponents associated with system management are:

- (1) the acquisition and dissemination of pertinent information, and
- (2) the monitoring of agency commitments.

While as already stated the success of this statewide system depends on the mutual engagement of all concerned agencies, logic and professional judgment, as well as the nature, resources, expertise, and history of the SEA all point to that agency as the central body of responsibility for these administrative roles.

Organizing the System

Forming a decision-making body

Common sense as well as the pertinent regulatory provisions of P.L. 94-142 specify widespread input into the design of the state's system of personnel development. Thus, an initial responsibility of the SEA is the formation of a representative body. This group would be expected to convene periodically and play a decisive role in the formation and evaluation of the evolving and/or functioning inservice plan. The steps involved in forming such a group, as well as its ultimate composition and specific nature of operation, will vary between states. However, commonalities will exist because of regulatory provisions and SEA experience with similar advisory and decision-making groups.

Considerations of economy and efficiency of operation suggest the formation of a single state level advisory body, and in most circumstances such a single entity should prove sufficient. Nevertheless, unusual state conditions such as vast geographic distances possibly combined with two or more distant major population centers might support more than one inservice group. In such instances, their constituency and general operation would likely be parallel except for differentiations of geographic region.

One alternative administrative structure that might prove effective is a single state level committee with several smaller regionally defined bodies reporting to it. Such factors as regional disparities in assessed training needs, irreconcilable differences in views or philosophies toward inservice, and significant variation in inservice priorities, resources, and target

populations might favor this alternative. However, such a plan would likely prove more costly and less efficient and should be implemented only upon the failure of a single co-operating statewide representative body.

The next question relates to whether a unique group needs to be assembled specifically for this purpose. As will be noted, the composition of the group is determined both by the nature of the responsibility and the involvement specified in the regulations. Whether a new group needs to be constituted depends on whether an appropriately representative body is available. A statewide advisory or other type group with approximately or even exactly the desirable composition may already exist. However, this group may be charged with time and energy consuming responsibilities, or its purpose may conflict with the purposes and responsibilities of the inservice mission. Almost every state currently has at some degree of operational capacity a state-level committee which may serve the purposes required here either as it is organized or with some minor modification.

In April of 1974, the Division of Personnel Preparation in the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped issued a directive mandating cooperative manpower planning within each of the 50 states, the territories, and the District of Columbia. As of this writing, 42 states including Washington, D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico report the existence of manpower planning committees. The responsibilities of such manpower planning bodies at the state level clearly dovetails with the 94-142 requirement for a comprehensive system of personnel development including inservice training.

If constituted in keeping with the personnel objectives of both the 1974 BEH directive and P.L. 94-142, these state-level committees would have approximately identical membership. This brings us to the question of who would serve on a decision-making body for the development and conduct of a comprehensive inservice system. While the answer here is relatively clear-cut, there may be some variation necessary from state to state as well as within any particular state from time to time.

First, the SEA must be represented on any such statewide committee related to P.L. 94-142. It would be desirable for the SEA's chief special education official or the individual with primary responsibility for inservice, if such a state-level position exists, to serve as chairperson of this committee. If the SEA representative is an individual with this stature and role relevance, it is unlikely that many additional SEA personnel, if any, need serve on the committee. In general, the goal in the formation of the inservice committee should be the minimum number of individuals capable of meeting the responsibility effectively and efficiently, while representing the full gamut of interests involved.

The next major membership constituency is the state's colleges and universities, which will have primary responsibility for the preparation and delivery of inservice training. Ideally, each public and private IHE in the state would have an administrative designate or the individual having major inservice responsibility within special education assigned to the committee. The large number of colleges and universities in some states would, in terms of efficiency

of function, preclude such universal representation. A number of mechanisms are available for achieving IHE representation without overwhelming the committee membership. Some IHEs will self-select out of the process because they lack interest in inservice training or realize that their limited resources cannot adequately handle the added burden of so major an undertaking.

The maximally desirable number of IHE representatives on the committee must be determined within the individual state context, taking into consideration such relevant inservice conditions as the number of IHEs and their "state of the art" related to inservice training. Should additional cuts in IHE membership be necessary after the self-selection process, several options are available. States can randomly select a predetermined number of IHEs from those interested, rotate memberships so that over a two-to-three-year period, all the state's IHEs would have the opportunity to participate. Another option would call for the state's IHEs to elect a specific number of themselves to the committee for either a short- or long-term period.

These options all potentially threaten to weaken the value and performance of the committee. The purposes of the committee and the importance of its mission are such that neither random nor political factors should influence its membership. If fewer than all the interested IHEs can serve with efficiency on the committee, then those IHEs objectively most able to contribute resources to the inservice objective should be included. Such indices as the agency's history of inservice effort and performance may also be considered in the member selection process. Under such circumstances, it is feasible

that "major " universities which are unresponsive to inservice needs may be excluded from participation while a more industrious IHE with fewer resources may be included. An IHE so precluded from committee participation should still be assured alternative opportunities for participation in state plans.

Similar considerations pertain to LEA participation. Again it is unrealistic to anticipate full direct participation by all the state's LEAs, and again there are the same options for determining representative participants. If "fairness" or political considerations dominate the process, then random selection, election results, or geographic distribution can substitute for relevant criteria. But, the alternative use of relevant selection criteria is preferable.

Some school districts should be included because they are already extensively involved in inservice efforts, and their experience will likely prove instructive. Other school districts should be involved because they are more isolated from sources of inservice and have fewer financial and/or manpower resources. Some LEAs have a long history of services to handicapped students; other have little if any. Some LEAs have a variety of service options for a diversity of handicapping conditions; others may have a single classroom for EMR pupils. Inasmuch as all school districts will receive inservice training under P.L. 94-142 provisions, criteria assuring a representative population of LEAs should be utilized in selecting committee participants.

The remainder of the inservice committee membership should be determined by a combination of common sense and 94-142 regulatory language. Common sense would dictate, for example, that

any major inservice training projects within the state (such as those funded by BEH) should be represented. The P.L. 94-142 rules and regulations tell us that "the State educational agency must insure that all public and private institutions of higher education, and other agencies and organizations (including representatives of handicapped, parent, and other advocacy organizations) in the State which have an interest in the preparation of personnel for the education of handicapped children, have an opportunity to participate fully in the development, review, and annual updating of the comprehensive system of personnel development."

Overcoming barriers to communication and cooperation

As Chapter I brought out, a major deterrent to the realization of comprehensive statewide educational programs and services is the failure in communication and cooperation among the agencies involved. Having organized a representative body of leadership personnel from the organizations and agencies with legitimate interests in inservice training, the SEA has taken a formidable step toward resolving this problem. At a minimum, a forum now exists for candid discussion and examination of the conflicts described in Chapter I, as well as of any specifically local difficulties.

The effort devoted to opening channels of communication will depend on a number of factors, including the nature of past cooperative efforts among the agencies and individuals involved, the degree to which patterns of non-communication and lack of cooperation are entrenched in the operation of these agencies, and the type of preparatory communication by the SEA before convening the inservice committee.

Potential problems in cooperation or communication which the SEA can anticipate from experience may be offset largely by communicating clearly in advance the general objectives and expectations of the group and of the individual agencies. By establishing at least general guidelines in advance, the group will not be starting from zero and will be in position to formulate operational details rather than vie for responsibility and power.

Obviously not all communication and cooperation problems can be controlled through SEA planning and anticipation, but they can at least be reduced and perhaps minimized. In addition, the SEA itself must proceed independent of its own potential for less than candid communication and without jeopardizing integrity or objectivity in working cooperatively with other agencies.

Should the committee find itself operating in a climate that is not optimal for professional progress in inservice planning, routinized procedures exist for enhancing communication. Simulation exercises and large and small group activities designed precisely for this purpose can be implemented. In addition, group facilitation can be achieved through contracting with professionals who have expertise in group dynamics and communication skills. In general, however, the issue raised in the first chapter on factors impeding cooperation in statewide inservice planning should provide a sufficient discussion basis for overcoming at least initial difficulties in cooperative communication.

Managing the System

Disseminating pertinent information

The availability of updated and accurate information is a crucial

prerequisite for the effective functioning of the inservice committee. Each member of the committee should be kept apprised of the status of each of the components of the inservice program from needs assessments to the most current results of evaluative efforts. In addition, committee members should understand the roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies and individuals involved and how their own participation fits into the overall system.

This type of information describing the current and anticipated status of the state's inservice effort will underlie an agency's ability to plan and schedule its manpower and resources most efficiently. The data providing the basis on which to plan program participation is important for interagency cooperation as well as within-agency resource management. To the maximum degree feasible, such data should enable agencies to plan the allocation of relevant resources at least six months prior to their fiscal year.

The SEA in this case will not merely assume a role as disseminator of information. Although it would in most instances probably be the most logical vehicle for information transmittal. The agency serving in this capacity must be more of a clearinghouse, acting both as a gatherer and communicator from and to each of the participating agencies. In addition to the exchange of information at the committee meetings, efforts can be organized to facilitate additional information exchange. Prompt preparation and distribution of committee meeting minutes and printing a periodic newsletter will facilitate this goal. The designation of one individual in the SEA (perhaps the chairperson of the committee) as a reliable phone contact and referral source will

promote the productive sharing of information. In some situations, one of the cooperating agencies other than the SEA can participate most effectively in the inservice plan through fulfilling this clearinghouse role.

Monitoring agency commitments

One managerial function suited to the SEA is monitoring agency commitments assigned through the inservice committee's deliberations. In keeping with its role as a clearinghouse for inservice information and activities, the SEA can work with individual agencies, subgroups within the committee, and the committee as a whole to establish time lines, procedures for reporting progress, and mechanisms for carrying out inservice responsibilities. The intent here is to facilitate progress through coordination rather than imposition of external control of resources. Despite the importance of cooperation among the several agencies involved in this effort, each must maintain its autonomy. The inservice mission under P.L. 94-142 is only one of each agency's numerous responsibilities.

Nevertheless, IHEs and other providers of services may at times overcommit or miscalculate resources. Other problems may occur when anticipated resources fail to materialize or prove inadequate to meet the scope of the commitment. Under these circumstances, the integrity of the inservice program may have to be preserved through the reallocation of inservice responsibilities and/or resources. The alternative might entail inequity in the delivery of inservice to particular groups of educational personnel in the state or within one or more regions of the state. This monitoring function is

a likely extension of the SEA's administrative role in the comprehensive system of statewide inservice training.

DETERMINING INSERVICE NEEDS

Prior to the delivery of any educational service, a number of prerequisite activities must occur. The nature of these preparatory activities depends on the type of service to follow. An orientation session prefaced by an alerting memo to the persons involved may provide adequate preparation in some situations. Others will require more extensive preparation, including the acquisition of materials, the redesign of educational settings, the involvement and coordination of consultants, and so forth.

The degree and nature of preparatory activities will vary from state to state. A state that has some experience in organized and/or comprehensive inservice education with effective interagency communication and cooperation will not require the same degree of planning as a state experiencing more independent or less organized inservice delivery. *However, no state can yet claim an effective statewide program providing consistent quality inservice to all regions and all persons affected by P.L. 94-142.*

The major tasks preceding statewide inservice are related to the determination of inservice needs. The primary vehicle for meeting this objective should involve some organized needs assessment. A number of mechanisms for carrying out needs assessments are currently in operation for diverse purposes in school districts nationwide, and most can probably be adapted fairly readily to inservice planning.

Prior to organizing and implementing a state-level needs assessment, at least one preliminary task will be required. Some attention will invariably have to be devoted to motivating individual and agency preparation in the overall process. Thus, these motivational considerations are discussed here before presenting guidelines for needs assessment methodology.

Motivating Participation

Since P.L. 94-142 was signed into law by President Ford in November of 1975, a general awareness of and knowledge about the law's provisions has reached the consciousness of the public at large and educators in particular. The SEAs have been especially active to date in conducting workshops, convening meetings, and distributing printed material for purposes of "awareness" and information dissemination. For the most part it appears that the initial resistance which routinely surfaces with impending change has abated.

While many procedural details are yet to be determined, the philosophy and intent of this legislation are being integrated progressively at all levels of education from preschool through higher education. Thus, we are by no means "starting from scratch" in motivating individual and agency participation. Nevertheless, the task of formulating and putting into operation an ongoing statewide system of comprehensive inservice training will require attention to inducements and reinforcements for cooperative participation.

The following discussion handles motivation separately for each of the three major types of agency. Parent groups, professional associations, and other interest groups,

such as those comprised of handicapped persons themselves, are by their very nature and organization motivated to participate in projects bearing on service delivery. For this reason, we will not devote particular attention to such agencies here but their participation is desirable as well as required under the regulatory provisions of P.L. 94-142.

This differentiation of agencies in regard to promoting their inservice participation reflects differences in suitability of mechanisms rather than level of need. IHEs, LEAs, and SEAs are all more likely to benefit from external motivation or tangible "pay-off" for participation in statewide planning. The specific nature of this "payoff" will vary between agencies. Such differentiation is also related to the rationale for participation which may be more compatible with the perspective of one agency than another.

However, the overriding rationale for cooperative participation in statewide inservice planning transcends agency roles or views. *The most compelling rationale for cooperative participation is the knowledge that our inservice efforts are in the best interests of the millions of handicapped children and youth who ultimately will benefit.* Nevertheless, it would be naive if not negligent to assume that this common sense of purpose in and of itself is sufficient to motivate interagency cooperation and effort.

Motivating LEA participation

Historically, LEA personnel and teachers have been the major groups targeted for inservice training. These inservice sessions frequently have been less than optimal experiences, and many teachers and school

administrators have become justifiably wary of "another workshop." Criticisms include unevenness in the quality of presentation, lack of application or practicality in the content, and disparities between the topics presented and the needs expressed.

This all too common negative view of inservice supports the first item in the following list of motivational considerations pertaining to LEAs:

- uniformly high quality training,
- opportunity for active involvement,
- preparedness for inservice at the preservice level,
- availability of tangible reinforcers.

Perhaps there will always be those who cannot be reached and those who will remain resistant to training efforts. Certainly, though, the number of such individuals can be minimized through concerted attention to these motivational considerations.

Quality training

Undoubtedly, the single most effective guarantee of full LEA cooperative participation in statewide inservice relates to the quality of the training provided. While logistical support can be gained through the cooperation of one or more highly placed LEA administrator(s) and/or the supportive efforts of the local school board, the fulfillment of inservice objectives ultimately must deal with the individuals who comprise the target population. It is widely recognized that any school-based effort can be undermined by

unconvinced or otherwise skeptical personnel.

The inservice options provided through this comprehensive system of personnel development must be of a consistently and uniformly high quality. This assurance will depend largely on the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the evaluation efforts to be considered later in this monograph. In addition, the personnel participating must know unequivocally that their feedback will be treated credibly and in fact will influence the nature of the ongoing inservice effort.

The providers of inservice must be selected and their particular roles assigned on the basis of qualifications, not because of mere availability, interest, or some feeling of fairness in delegating responsibility. An ineffective and uninspiring college professor is a poor choice to offer a knowledge-based lecture, although this same individual may be highly qualified for designing and/or developing self-tutorial training packages or supervising applied experiences. Objectivity, comprehensiveness, and sincerity of evaluation as well as the suitability of inservice providers are crucial but not all-inclusive criteria necessary to insure quality. In fact, the overall content of this monograph bears on the qualitative features of inservice programs.

Active involvement

While this document espouses the IHE as the primary agency responsible for the delivery of inservice training, this is by no means intended to preclude the active and genuine involvement of LEA and SEA personnel in that process. As will be noted, the initial task of undertaking a broad and directive needs assessment

is allocated largely under the dual auspices of the LEA and SEA. In fact, all functions in the process of designing or delivering a comprehensive plan of inservice staff development can benefit from the participation of all three agencies.

The first step in enabling and communicating such involvement is to create a climate conducive to active participation. The individual or individuals responsible for organizational activities (most likely SEA leadership personnel) can contribute to this type of environment by assuring open and direct communication of information. Too often, the LEA finds itself designated the recipient or otherwise generally passive agent in some "co-operative" program or project. By guaranteeing LEA representation in the basic early stages of program planning, the desired goal of active participation can be realized. While we previously discussed the value of and options for LEA representation on the statewide inservice committee, the point stressed here is the analogous importance of cooperative participation even in decision making on the composition of that committee.

Preservice preparedness

The fact that motivating inservice participation is even an issue is to a large degree the result of a lack in preparedness at the preservice level. We must come to view inservice training as an anticipated, desirable, and integral element of education. As school-age youngsters and their parents increasingly experience teachers and other school personnel participating in inservice training, this aspect of the educators' responsibility will become ingrained in the public's view of the role.

In addition, educators should not complete any preservice preparation program with the erroneous belief that a terminal point has been achieved in their training. An ongoing responsibility for continuous education must be instilled at the preservice level. In fact, teaching and other school personnel should seek out additional knowledge and skills spontaneously during the course of their inservice experience. Local colleges and universities, material and other resource centers, and libraries are among the available vehicles for continuing professional education.

The preservice curriculum should not only alert prospective educators to the availability of such support services, but should also provide direct training in the mechanics of their use. This monograph discusses elsewhere such mechanisms as renewable certification, which can be used to enforce continuing education responsibilities. The pertinent point here, and our ultimate goal at the preservice level, should be the inculcation of a value system concerning inservice which can later preclude the need for enforcement tactics.

Tangible reinforcers

Even if you instill the value and desirability of continuing education, it may still be useful to offer external reinforcement. Several fairly standard or at least commonly recognized reinforcers are in use and others can be generated to suit individual needs and situations. Some may be more of an incentive than others to certain individuals, and their degree of desirability may also vary for each individual from time to time. Following are examples of some tangible reinforcers which may motivate

LEA personnel to participate in inservice training:

(1) Continuing education units

Continuing education units (CEUs), like any token reinforcement system, have a general utility and a wide applicability. Advantages of CEUs include their cumulative capacity and their nonspecific value. That is, continuing education units can be accumulated and translated into course credit or salary increments or both. In addition, these token units can be assigned relative and varying values according to the type and extent of inservice participation they represent. Such a reward system also lends itself to standardization between school districts and across state borders.

(2) Release time, extra compensation, and stipends

The use of release time may be viewed not so much as a reward for inservice participation as an appropriate allocation of time for this responsibility. Release time can be designated in a variety of ways. Specific days throughout the school year may be designated for inservice programs on a district-wide basis, or some predetermined period of time may be allocated per teacher for individually selected inservice training experience. A variation that may prove more suitable for some personnel in certain school settings is extra compensation for inservice time. Either prorated regular wages or some arbitrary compensation scale can be devised to encourage inservice participation on weekends or after regular school hours. Direct stipends to support the expenses incurred in inservice participation is a related alternative.

(3) Course credit and salary increments

Course credit and salary increments often are interrelated reinforcement mechanisms. The accumulation of course credits beyond those required for the teaching degree can translate into salary increments. Course credit is earned most typically through college or university on-campus course attendance or through a university extension program. Other options are feasible here including such cooperative arrangements as the granting of college credit for field experience and various nontraditional inservice activities (e.g., supervised observation).

(4) Renewable certification

The granting of "life certification" by State Education Agencies and colleges and universities has solid historical roots in all states. Nevertheless, as educational practices and principles change at an accelerating rate, the granting of indefinite licensure must increasingly be questioned. While turnover in teaching personnel occurs at an alarming rate, life certification potentially may support 40 or more years of unrenewed teaching methods and content. Increasing numbers of states are exploring alternative approaches to renewable certification based on continuous inservice education, including the successful completion of ongoing coursework and/or the demonstrated mastery of new skills.

The above approaches to motivate LEA personnel participation in inservice do not exhaust the possibilities nor are they mutually exclusive. One or more of these options can be applied, or alternatives can be designed to suit local needs and conditions.

Motivating SEA participation

The provisions of P.L. 94-142 designating obligations of the SEAs would seem sufficient to assure SEA participation in developing and implementing inservice personnel preparation. Similarly, the magnitude of the task appears to be sufficient rationale to assure cooperation with the state's LEAs and IHEs. But while SEA personnel directly responsible for special education are now well informed and probably active in implementing P.L. 94-142, other SEA personnel may not see the relationship between their roles and this federal legislation. Since the regulations specify inservice for all personnel involved in education of the handicapped and considerable progress is being made in mainstreaming, SEA staff with responsibilities in guidance, curriculum and instruction, statewide testing, and so forth, need to be informed and to participate in the process to varying degrees.

This concentration and coordination of effort require the involvement of divisional administrators and the full support of the chief state school officers. Thus a diversity of high level SEA personnel would be involved in the design and conduct of the required Annual Program Plan, and specific areas of responsibility for implementation should be spelled out within the SEA.

The SEA has the advantage of being a single agency in each state and thus free of competitive interests. While some SEAs already have devoted considerable effort to the actual preparation and delivery of inservice training, their unique vantage point would seem most suited to the tasks of coordination, administration, and regulation. To the degree that SEAs

provide direct inservice instruction, the target audience would be the state's IHE and LEA administrators concerned with the purposes and logistics of the statewide inservice plan. This effort would be in accord with the overall role of the SEA and contribute to comprehensiveness and uniformity of responsibility among the other agencies.

Motivating IHE participation

The nation's colleges and universities historically have experienced little change in either mission or method. Higher education for the most part continues to occur on campus. Notwithstanding such "experimental" programs as earned college credit for work experience and performance-based evaluation criteria, higher education consists of teacher-student contact through lecture, laboratory/practicum, and symposium-type classes. Where university-sponsored instruction may occur off campus, typically these same instructional models are used under the auspices of a college or university extension program.

Education is one of the primary disciplines offering coursework through continuing education/extension programs. Yet few instructors in colleges of education would view their professional role as devoted primarily or even largely to inservice training. College teachers who may be involved in inservice education typically do so only periodically, through their IHE's extension program, and often view it as an added responsibility for which they may or may not receive extra compensation.

This description of the inservice role in higher education should not persist indefinitely. In fact,

declining enrollments, limited preservice budgets, and heightened demand for inservice training suggest that IHE professional roles must change. *The immediate future should witness a trend toward increased inservice involvement.* Both faculty time and departmental resources should shift from preservice to inservice responsibility along with the changing trends in enrollment and new demands for services.

This direction can be facilitated by integrating adequate and appropriate preparatory activities in the training of graduate students, exposing post-masters trainees to inservice training and involving them in it. Some IHE faculty in the future may have most if not all of their responsibility off campus in local school districts or at special off-campus inservice centers. Professors like other professionals tend to seek predictability and regularity in their occupations, and considerable resistance to role changes can be anticipated. However, as new instructional roles and resources become available and routine, the training experience and expertise of IHE personnel will meet the challenges of inservice education most effectively.

An increasing inservice involvement for IHEs and in particular Departments of Special Education has other benefits and advantages. Most faculty members in colleges of education have backgrounds of training and experience in public school teaching. These individuals tend to have minimal contact with LEAs once they move to an IHE setting, and they are insulated from changes occurring in local school districts. This, to some extent, may account for deficiencies noted by LEA personnel in current inservice programs.

More active involvement in inservice education and increasing contact with LEA personnel will serve as valuable renewal experience for IHE faculty. This professional renewal and heightened field contact will not only influence inservice qualifications, but also will prove advantageous in preservice and graduate education where contemporary school-based practices and experiences will be available more readily.

Conducting Needs Assessment

The conduct of various needs assessments is both a requirement in the P.L. 94-142 rules and regulations and a common sense prerequisite to inservice training. There are two types of needs which must be assessed to enable a state to construct an adequate system of personnel development: (1) the numbers and types of personnel needed and (2) the specific content areas and experiences to be offered those personnel through inservice training.

Relative to the first kind of needs assessment, the regulations state that, "Each annual program plan must provide that the State educational agency...conducts an annual needs assessment to determine if a sufficient number of qualified personnel are available in the State" and "Each annual program plan must include the results of the needs assessment...broken out by need for new personnel and need for retrained personnel." The SEA is both the specified agency of responsibility and the logically appropriate central agency for compiling and disseminating these data.

Ideally, in order to assure accuracy and consistency across school districts in data retrieval, the SEA would delegate this responsibility

internally with a small number of SEA personnel assessing these needs directly on a district-by-district basis. But a direct canvass is unrealistic because this procedure must be repeated annually, most states cover vast geographic and population distributions, and SEAs are inadequately staffed for such an undertaking.

Thus, this first census-type needs assessment must be a cooperative effort between the state's LEAs and the SEA. Each LEA, intermediate educational unit, or other administrative entity must periodically (at least annually) report the appropriate data to the SEA for compilation and dissemination as part of the Annual Program Plan. Of course, any data analyses of either local or statewide interest can occur at either level.

To assure accuracy and compatibility of data collected independently throughout the state, the SEA must communicate clear guidelines for data collection to each administrative unit involved. These guidelines should encompass procedures, definitions of terms, and categories of data to be submitted. The personnel questions posed in the regulations translate fairly clearly into data categories. At a minimum, the following is required to determine whether sufficient numbers and types of personnel exist and to differentiate new personnel from those available for retraining:

- (1) numbers of handicapped pupils by grade level and handicapping area;
- (2) number of teachers (and support/ancillary personnel) by service model (i.e., self-contained, resource room, consulting teacher, etc.); and

- (3) numbers and categories of handicapped pupils not currently receiving services.

In combination with projections for new personnel from the state's colleges and universities, these data can be analyzed to determine the relationship between personnel supply and demand. If the data show an oversupply of some types of personnel (either by service model or area of certification) in some region(s) of the state, a retraining priority is identified. Similarly, as the data identify shortages of certain types of personnel which cannot be filled by retraining of existing personnel, a demand for new personnel is established.

The second type of needs assessment relates to the particular knowledge and skill areas that personnel may require to meet the intent of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. The P.L. 94-142 rules and regulations express this objective by requiring the Annual Program Plan to include a description of "the process used in determining the inservice training needs of personnel engaged in the education of handicapped children"; and by specifying that the Annual Program Plan "identify the areas in which training is needed...." Thus, the SEA is expected to describe the needs assessment procedure along with the results.

Since different types of personnel assume varying roles and encounter varying pupil needs, the demands made upon them and the knowledge and skills required will vary. For example, a teacher of a self-contained TMR classroom will have inservice needs which vary from the regular classroom teacher who has two children with mild behavior disorders. Similarly, a high school principal will have

inservice needs which differ from those of paraprofessionals or teacher aides. At the same time, all of these individuals will have some needs in common.

A guiding principle here is that inservice needs must be identified by distinct personnel categories (e.g., regular class teachers, psychologists, physical education teachers, teachers of pupils with learning disabilities). While all educational personnel will have many inservice training needs, it is important to emphasize that our concerns here relate to those knowledge and skill areas which underlie the effective implementation of P.L. 94-142.

This latter point bears directly on the procedures to be utilized in undertaking the needs assessment. The inservice needs of the various personnel categories cannot be determined without understanding how these various roles must function under the provisions of P.L. 94-142. For example, those individuals (including parents) who may participate in an IEP conference or otherwise contribute to the preparation of IEPs must become familiar with the nature, components, purposes, and procedures pertaining to the IEP. Similarly, while all education personnel providing direct service to handicapped children and youth would benefit from inservice training on a topic such as individualizing instruction, the regular classroom teacher about to integrate mildly retarded learners would find such inservice of particular priority.

The methodological implications of these observations will differ according to who serves as the data source in determining inservice needs. The individual knowing the most about

the knowledge and skills of a particular educator is probably that individual himself. This would suggest a straightforward needs assessment methodology. Some designee within the LEA would simply need to ask each individual what inservice needs he recognizes. The major deterrent to this approach is that individuals may not in fact recognize what new responsibilities are implied for them by P.L. 94-142 or even what its major provisions are. A more objective procedure for tapping the trainee himself as a source of data is the use of skills assessment devices including pretests of knowledge and performance evaluations.

A desirable alternative is to have an individual who is highly knowledgeable with regard to P.L. 94-142 specify the discrete knowledge and skill areas associated with the educational roles involved. Inservice training could progress on the basis of this needs assessment. The major inefficiency here would relate to individual differences in past training and experience where there are, for example, regular classroom teachers who are well trained and experienced in individualizing instruction.

One solution would be an approach that combines the advantages and positive features of each of these needs assessment techniques. For example, a task analysis of each personnel role related to the provisions of P.L. 94-142 could yield a listing of knowledge and skill areas required of the various categories of personnel. Each individual could then respond in a checklist format to the list generated for his role indicating such options as: (1) fully possesses skill or knowledge; (2) is somewhat knowledgeable; (3) could benefit from inservice; or (4) is entirely lacking in knowledge or skill. While a

variety of needs assessment methodologies can be created for local or statewide use, the effort should reflect some input from the personnel themselves in light of the knowledge and skill areas that we know are requisite to P.L. 94-142 implementation.

Establishing Inservice Priorities

The P.L. 94-142 regulations state that as part of the personnel development section of the Annual Program Plan, the SEA must "describe the results of the needs assessment ...with respect to identifying needed areas of training, and assigning priorities to those areas." Several points highlight the relevant considerations in establishing training priorities:

- 1) The intent and provisions of P.L. 94-142 define topical parameters for inservice;
- 2) The rules and regulations for P.L. 94-142 call for the establishment of training priorities;
- 3) Training priorities will vary over time;
- 4) Priorities will vary according to trainees' professional roles;
- 5) Determining the priority of training topics may be an integral component of the needs assessment itself.

Any screening of topics or other selection process in the needs assessment procedure, such as the decision to include certain topics as options while excluding others, serves to some degree to establish priorities. Within the range of topics ultimately agreed upon as areas for inservice

training, additional procedures can determine their relative importance for the particular target population. When, for example, a given population of professionals (e.g., regular classroom teachers) responds to a checklist of topics for potential inservice, the relative frequency of choices may validly represent this group's priority. Clearly, though, these data reflect only a priority of need as perceived by trainees. This procedure for establishing topical priorities can be carried out easily as part of the needs assessment process, but is limited by its source and nature.

Other considerations enter and to some degree complicate the picture of setting priorities. For example, the mere listing of topics in some order reflecting relative importance does not in itself adequately handle the problem of priorities. The need to determine relative importance of topics is only one aspect of the rationale for determining priorities. Perhaps more important in terms of establishing priorities is the need to *sequence* topics properly so that the trainee derives maximum benefits.

Quite analogous to planning instruction for children, the purposeful sequencing of curriculum is critical to a successful effort. Unlike establishing relative importance, which can largely utilize trainee input and/or feedback, sequencing decisions are made more appropriately by those in command of the training curriculum as a whole. The sequencing of curriculum is one component of the total process of designing the inservice content. As such, it involves those IHE or other personnel engaged in the development of the inservice curriculum.

The factors of continuous change in priorities over time is related to the reactive nature of inservice itself. As trainees participate in training activities and continuously gain new and additional experience, their inservice needs as well as their perceptions of those needs change appropriately. The implication here for inservice planning is the recognition of priority setting as a periodic activity which requires reevaluation at least annually.

Along the same line, just as inservice topics will vary according to the professional role and needs of the trainee, so, too, priorities must be established independently for both regular and special personnel, teaching and administrative staff, and for discrete target populations like parents, hearing officers, and such medical personnel as school nurses. There are generic topics including least restrictive environment and nondiscriminatory practices that cut across trainee role; however, such concerns as the involvement of the particular trainee role, if any, as part of the IEP process would be distinct and logically differentiated.

A particular individual in a school setting may require a highly individualized inservice experience in the case of a preservice training deficiency, an unusual or unique school responsibility, or other situation. When such needs arise, the inservice program has a responsibility to meet them with a minimum of disruption of general inservice resources. This implies considerable flexibility in inservice options for gaining knowledge and skills. The next section of this document deals primarily with an examination of such alternatives.

DETERMINING OPTIMAL SYSTEMS

Having determined and established priorities among the inservice needs of various groups of educational personnel, the next major area of activity involves the preparation of inservice programs. The term "programs" is used here in a broad sense to encompass the full gamut of inservice vehicles from on- or off-campus courses to print materials prepared for distribution to school personnel. As described later, the particular mode used to communicate inservice content will vary, reflecting both the nature of the content and the intended target group. The same content may be disseminated appropriately through alternative means for different types of personnel, because a successful inservice effort of this comprehensiveness cannot rely on only one or even a few approaches to programming. Combinations of various traditional approaches, adaptations of these procedures, and innovative program designs will all come into play. This section begins by listing and describing a variety of inservice program approaches.

Identifying and Categorizing Delivery Vehicles

The range of techniques for delivering inservice training may be grouped into five categories: (1) authoritative presentations; (2) tutorial study; (3) guided study; (4) demonstration approaches; and (5) independent study.

Authoritative presentations

This category is best characterized by the oral presentation of information by one or more individuals to a group of trainees such as college and university coursework, on-campus or at field sites, which

relies primarily on the lecture format. Expert guest speakers and the use of audio and video cassettes or tapes are other examples of this class. Such approaches typically are marked by little or no interaction between the provider(s) and the audience. The audience remains relatively passive as recipients of information and does not ordinarily have an opportunity to apply content mastered within the context of the inservice experience.

Tutorial study

The inservice vehicles categorized under tutorial study are marked by close and frequent interaction between the provider and the audience. The audience in this situation will be small, and the training provided can be highly individualized. Tutorial approaches accommodate a broad range of content from factual information to clinical techniques and instructional methods. Thus, both one-to-one information communication and practicum supervision may be viewed as tutorial modes of inservice. The characteristically low teacher-student ratio is suited for meeting inservice needs of a rather technical nature or a highly specialized skill area.

Guided study

Guided study encompasses a less structured interaction between the provider and the trainee while maintaining a student-teacher relationship. Approaches included are seminar groups, instructional modules requiring external evaluation of performance, and periodic feedback or supervision while on the job. Guided study typically enables the provider to interact in a relatively informal manner with a potentially large number of trainees. Such techniques appear particularly well

suited for perfecting skills already possessed and pursuing in greater depth topics with which the trainee is already familiar.

Demonstration approaches

Demonstrations are advantageous for conveying applied skills and techniques that do not readily lend themselves to verbal description. Demonstration teaching can involve small or large group instruction provided in either a live or mediated fashion. It is often an integral component of other delivery vehicles, and a workshop may actually be comprised of one or a series of related demonstrations. They are by their very nature highly practical instructional experiences, and when combined with trainee participation may prove most interesting to teaching personnel and others providing direct services to children. The availability and access to pupils that school settings permit make demonstration techniques particularly suited for integrating training experiences into the routine of the school setting.

Independent study

Independent study options represent probably the most cost-efficient technique. In addition, they offer maximum flexibility in trainee scheduling. Most professionals in school settings possess the capacity to acquire a considerable degree of inservice content independently. To the degree that inservice providers are thus free of the responsibility and time involved in direct trainee interaction, they may devote their talent and energy to conceptualizing and preparing materials for trainee use. Print material ranging from published books to mimeographed handouts, as well as specially designed self-instructional learning packages can be used and mastered on an independent basis.

The use of independent study options requires particular attention to trainee motivation. Instructional and/or resource centers for storing materials in school and the technology of computer terminals facilitate and increase the practicality of independent study.

Matching Inservice Vehicles to Conditions

The brief descriptions of inservice approaches presented in the previous section alluded to a variety of conditions and variables which relate to the appropriateness of a particular delivery mode. No individual inservice vehicle is inherently more desirable than any other. The particular mode of inservice delivery selected for a specific objective will necessarily and appropriately vary according to both audience and content characteristics. The objective here is not to promote or endorse one or more inservice delivery vehicles, but to sensitize statewide inservice planners to the variety of relevant variables and the manner in which they individually and in combination influence the selection of delivery vehicles.

As IHE faculty historically have been the major designers and providers of inservice training, the commonly recognized and frequently selected vehicles have been those which accommodate college and university schedules and procedures most conveniently. Thus there has been an almost routine use of variable credit-hour courses generally offered through extension programs. The major alternative to inservice coursework has been the one-time workshop typically held after school hours. Both workshops and extension courses are logistically convenient for most LEA personnel, tend not to disrupt school routine, and meet existing

obligatory requirements for personnel participation in specific quantities of inservice training.

Extension coursework and workshops have distinct advantages and are highly well suited for some inservice objectives. The organizational features of a course, including its periodic convening over a semester's period of time (typically 12 to 16 weeks) is well suited for presenting a generally new and broad body of information to a relatively large group of individuals in an efficient manner. Similarly, workshops are well suited for an in-depth presentation of a single or otherwise narrow skill area and can efficiently accommodate a large number of participants over a short period of time. Such inservice vehicles also enable the talent and expertise residing in training institutions to contact the inservice personnel within geographically more convenient field sites.

While it is likely that such workshops and extension courses will continue to play a major role in meeting inservice needs in the next decade, LEA and IHE staff must coordinate their respective resources more closely in utilizing a broader range of inservice options. An expansion in training alternatives as well as the resulting interagency cooperation should have a positive impact on both the training institutions and the local schools.

Educators have long recognized and generally acknowledged that too great a proportion of preservice training occurs in on-campus settings removed physically from realistic inservice sites. Some colleges and universities have begun to integrate more frequent and earlier in-school practicum experiences into their preservice training programs. Ultimately, teacher training will ideally become a continuous

process, with LEA resources and personnel closely interacting with IHE resources and personnel at both the preservice and inservice levels. This integration of agency resources would help establish teacher training as an ongoing and continuous process from preservice through the inservice experience.

The following discussion highlights the major variables to be considered in selecting inservice delivery vehicles for particular purposes. We cannot hope to develop a formula for selecting inservice approaches, because there are circumstances under which more than one approach would be well suited for a specific inservice objective. In general, to the degree that alternative modes are appropriate and available, the inservice system is more flexible in accommodating individual trainee needs. In addition, less tangible or locally relevant variables may influence these decisions. For example, the availability or lack of availability of an individual possessing a special expertise would affect how that skill area would best be taught.

Nature of content to be conveyed

There are a number of aspects to the content dimension which can affect the choice of a delivery vehicle. Content comprised of knowledge, ideas, evolving trends, or other information that needs to be communicated to all or some segment of the educational team provides numerous alternatives. Such content can be transmitted in written or oral form. Depending on other relevant considerations such as the complexity of the material, both written and oral presentations may be necessary. Some school personnel may adequately master a particular content by reading a brief synopsis, while other trainee populations who have less pertinent

background, such as parents or para-professionals, may require contact with an instructor. The advantage of the latter approach is that the audience can pose questions and request clarification or elaboration as necessary. This is generally the advantage of live oral presentations compared with written or taped formats.

When the inservice content is comprised primarily of performance skills such as instructional methodology, pupil evaluation techniques, or behavior management practices, it is preferable to use inservice vehicles enabling the trainee to actually participate in the activity and receive evaluative feedback. One alternative approach to skill development which is often overlooked at the inservice level is observation. At the pre-service level, we typically make structured observation an important part of the student-teaching experience.

An example of how to use observation at the inservice level relates to the need for individuals who can serve competently as hearing officers. In most states, this need could be met largely by providing candidates who have previously read or heard about the responsibilities of the role with the opportunity to observe a well-handled hearing.

In most cases, success at inservice will require such a combination of approaches because most applied skills have some body of underlying knowledge content that needs to be transmitted either prior to or concurrent with the applied skill.

Size of target audience

Some inservice content derived from P.L. 94-142 is geared toward specific groups of educators while other topics are more broadly applicable. For example, nondiscriminatory testing is

a high priority training objective for assessment personnel, while the nature and purposes of individualized educational plans are highly important for all school personnel. Thus audience size may vary according to the inservice topic.

In addition, inservice providers necessarily will have some role in determining audience size depending upon such considerations as the nature of the content (e.g., factual or applied; complex or uncomplicated) and the availability of sufficient resources. An instructive film can be projected to a large audience, while the opportunity to have hands-on contact with a new instructional material will be limited by the quantity of material available and the time required to gain adequate familiarity. In general, the less the need for instructor-trainee interaction and the more factual in nature the inservice content, the larger the group that can be accommodated effectively at any particular time.

Time available for input

As we begin to construct inservice training systems more aggressively, we must remember that this will entail added responsibilities for the individuals involved. Only a limited period of time beyond the current school day can be scheduled for inservice activities. However, as we depart from the overused course and workshop options which require fixed blocks of time, then time will become less inhibiting. The desired goal here is to intertwine inservice training closely within the context of the day-to-day school routine, so that the actual functioning of experienced school personnel can serve as training for less experienced and new personnel.

Nevertheless, available time is and will continue to be a variable to be considered in planning inservice options. In general, the more flexible the mode of inservice, the less the time constraints involved. Printed inservice content can be read during free periods in the school day, at lunch, or at home in the evening. In contrast, a workshop requires all participants to assemble in a specified place at a particular time and for a fixed duration.

Motivation of target audience

An earlier section of this monograph discussed principles and techniques for motivating agency and individual participation in inservice. The variable addressed in this section relates to the motivation of trainees to gain the knowledge or skill of a particular inservice content. That is, an otherwise highly motivated target group may not be eager to participate in an inservice program that they do not perceive as pertinent to their needs. Or the amount of time which must necessarily be committed to a particular program may be disproportionate to the value or quantity of the content to be derived. Inservice planners can control this variable most effectively by assuring relevant content, efficient use of time, flexible approach, and quality programming. To the degree that inservice planners are sensitive to these conditions, the greater the motivation for school personnel to participate actively and even seek out additional training.

Availability of resources

A variety of considerations pertaining to the availability of personnel, materials, and facilities will have an impact on the selection of inservice delivery vehicles. The in-house availability of a professional with

the expertise and training ability necessary to communicate a knowledge or skill area effectively would enable approaches not advisable without such a resource. One factor that encourages the continued use of extension courses in field settings is the widespread availability of free classrooms after school hours, evenings, and weekends. But while the absence of pupils and normal school routine at these times supports course activity, it discourages the opportunity for immediate application and/or learning by observation.

The integration of a greater proportion of inservice training into the school setting, within school hours, can enhance both the availability and utility of resources. Under these circumstances, the educational setting itself becomes a major training resource. In time, the training experience should become simply a by-product of the ongoing major responsibility which is to provide education to pupils.

Not all inservice content or all target groups will require in situ training, and other resource considerations become relevant. For example, a centrally located instructor at an IHE setting can use commonly accessible telephone communication equipment to speak simultaneously to or exchange dialogue with LEA personnel at several distant or sparsely populated sites.

In general, it would be unrealistic to plan inservice options for which adequate resources are unavailable. At the same time, careful scrutiny of existing resources, along with a broader perception of what constitutes an inservice resource (e.g., a telephone, a 5th grade classroom, a well-equipped resource

room), can promote the identification of alternative inservice vehicles.

These are examples of the types of variables which influence inservice planning. Other factors, some of which may be particularly suited to certain local conditions, also need to be considered. This is an important part of inservice planning at both the statewide and local levels. The statewide inservice committee must attend to these conditions in delegating, assigning, and negotiating agency responsibilities. Similarly, these same criteria will influence the agreements and decisions between individual IHEs and LEAs cooperating in inservice planning. The complexity of variables involved can actually be an advantage in evolving new and innovative inservice options. The very process of considering the variables involved and examining the ways in which they can combine and rearrange encourages innovation.

Evolving Innovative Systems

The process of evolving innovative inservice delivery vehicles is not so much a unique skill as it is a by-product of systematic inservice planning. The process consists of identifying inservice delivery components and paying attention to the ways in which these components are in turn comprised of subcomponents, and so on. What is suggested here is comparable to a thorough task analysis process. The finer or more discrete the level of elements at which one analyzes inservice conditions and variables, the greater the number and variety of units available for constructing alternative systems. Because individuals from each of the major agencies involved bring varied perspectives to the process, it is likely to be most productive as a cooperative effort. The following steps should define at

least broadly the process of designing approaches to the dissemination of knowledge, products, and practices:

- (1) determining strengths and weaknesses of ongoing inservice practices;
- (2) determining inservice needs which are and are not being met;
- (3) identifying variables, conditions, and resources relevant to inservice;
- (4) analyzing delivery systems into components; and
- (5) reorganizing system components into alternative models.

The first four steps listed above focus attention on the information needed to construct inservice delivery options in light of the relevant influencing variables. The first step involves a determination of the relative strengths and weaknesses of inservice practices currently in use. It should be clear that no inservice practice is intrinsically good or bad or even better or worse. Inservice practices can be evaluated only in relationship to the context in which they occur.

By listing or otherwise spelling out the positive and negative features of ongoing inservice efforts, the contextual parameters associated with successful and unsuccessful efforts can begin to surface. It is important to identify the strengths in existing inservice so that success can be reinforced and built upon or expanded where beneficial. Similarly, identification of the weaknesses in an inservice program signals a target for change and an area of experimentation in procedure. In essence, if

one approach isn't working well, there is little to be lost by trying an alternative.

Identifying which inservice needs are and are not being met stimulates thinking about inservice models. Probably the needs that are being met are those most easily accommodated by existing delivery vehicles. The very fact that a particular inservice need is not being met may reflect the absence of the human or material resources required or the failure to deploy existing resources adequately. There is also a precautionary value here in that by identifying our inservice successes, we will be less likely to lose these achievements in the process of building comprehensive systems.

Finally, delivery systems like any other complex construct are comprised of distinct and delineable components. Analyzing existing systems into component parts serves to cue the design of new components and provides the building blocks for innovative systems. In a period of change and growth in inservice training, we are encountering an opportunity to experiment and innovate. Through carefully designed evaluation efforts, the successful efforts can be expanded and the unsuccessful ones can be modified or phased out.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

Evaluation of something as complex as a statewide training program is difficult. However, we have the potential within such a broad system to conduct truly systematic evaluation efforts. In fact, it is the very scope of the program which provides the two features most necessary for quality program evaluation, i.e., sources of data and time.

The first feature, sources/types of data, simply represents the fact that at this level we have a great number of teachers and other personnel participating and we can create a large variety of inservice options in various types of settings. That means we will have no shortage of "things" to look at to answer evaluation questions.

Time is an even more important feature. The expectation that inservice efforts will continue to be emphasized and supported gives us the opportunity to plan evaluations over a period of time and thus actually observe the effects of our efforts. We can actually discover whether the behaviors we hope to influence do in fact change.

Typically, evaluations associated with inservice training are as distinct as the various training experiences themselves. All states have dozens of independent inservice activities going on at any particular time. Most if not all are evaluated, although often in less than the most meaningful ways, such as, for example, asking participants whether they liked the program or thought it was beneficial, and/or whether they could answer some "knowledge" questions on the specific content immediately upon its completion. To some degree, this primitive type of evaluation is due to the unsystematic nature of current inservice programs. The organization of evaluation efforts possible in a comprehensive statewide system enables more insightful approaches.

Not all evaluation questions require particular insight, and there can be value in less sophisticated efforts. In general, our goal is an approach that provides precise evaluation data while consuming a minimum of resources. The following section of this chapter deals with the importance of selecting

specific evaluation questions and objective measures of change. It concludes with considerations pertaining to the realistic limits of program evaluation.

Monitoring Qualitative Features

Evaluation would be less complicated (and less interesting) if it were a purely quantitative process. Some types of evaluations are only quantitative. Typically, this is the case where the evaluation question is highly specific and has some objective measure. Thus the evaluation question, "Does this workshop increase participant's knowledge of its content?" is answered by administering a short quiz upon its completion. The score may be more a measure of short-term memory than an index of whether participants gained the intended professional skills or their behavior changed in the intended direction. These more abstract questions are not necessarily more difficult to answer. The solution is to (1) phrase the evaluation question in a highly specific manner, and (2) select an objective measure of change.

Because program evaluation questions are by their nature broad, they may have to be broken down into a series of more specific questions. Our broadest question relates to the overall effectiveness of the statewide program. However, the statewide program will include a considerable number of individual efforts which suggest more specific evaluation questions. The process continues to be one of defining (in increasingly more precise terms) what we mean by "program effectiveness."

It is this defining procedure which leads to the determination of more objective measures. For example, if inservice program effectiveness in a

particular setting means the development of more appropriate IEPs, then we at least know the source of our evaluation data--the IEPs developed. Continuing the processes of specifying and objectifying, we would next analyze what we mean by "appropriate" IEPs. This might represent IEPs which promote change in youngsters. Then the particular indices of pupil change as reflected in the IEP would serve as one objective measure.

What is recommended here is a general analytic process leading to the specification of evaluation questions in objective terms. It is a realistic conceptual approach to program evaluation. Once specific questions are posed in objective terms, the remaining mechanics of the evaluation effort become almost self-evident.

This approach is analogous to the widely disseminated Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) approach to program evaluation. The difference in the discrepancy model is in specifying program objectives as opposed to evaluation questions. The DEM evaluation is simply measuring (also as objectively as possible) the degree to which a prespecified objective is or is not achieved. Of course, the evaluation question approach is similarly determining the degree to which program objectives are being met.

The major deficiency in this type of evaluation is the possibility of missing the forest for the trees. That is, we may gather considerable data generally supporting individual program components while there exist major difficulties that we are not tapping. Certainly we would recognize that all inservice programs are going to have both positive and negative features. It is important not to approach evaluation defensively. When we do take a defensive stance,

we seek to confirm the value of what we are doing. The more appropriate goal is to confirm the value of what we do well while modifying those things that are not satisfactory. This requires sensitivity and openness to both successful and unsuccessful aspects of our programs.

While professional evaluators reject hearsay data and "feelings" about programs, such soft data occasionally alert us to important evaluation questions that we have overlooked. In any case, these should be translated into evaluation questions. Decisions which ultimately affect the quality of educational services require such objective support.

Finally, it is important to understand the limitations inherent in program evaluation. We cannot realistically expect to fully uncover the relationships between our interventions (specific programs of inservice) and our intended outcomes (improved services to handicapped students). A wide variety of influences, new programs, changes in personnel, community attitudes, and so forth, are occurring at any particular time in school settings. Being able to consistently pinpoint the relationship between particular inservice practices and outcomes suggests a degree of precision and control of variables that doesn't exist. In the best of all possible worlds, we would trace the direct impact of individual inservice experiences to gains in pupil performance. Rarely can we expect to achieve such an evaluation. However, to the degree that we can be precise in stating evaluation questions and their measurement, we are conducting credible, needed, and valuable evaluation.

Conducting Evaluation

Having emphasized the importance of seeking specificity and objectivity

in evaluation, we can turn to other aspects of program evaluation. The comprehensiveness of the inservice programs addressed here will enable alternatives to the analytical approach described in the prior section. Having large numbers of personnel statewide is conducive to evaluative research, because instead of looking only at independent program components in terms of their consequences, we can structure comparative evaluations.

For example, we can look at the relative efficacy of approaches to inservice delivery. The statewide scope of the study population allows us to select comparison groups under reasonably comparable field conditions. Thus we can at least have some confidence in relating different outcomes to our interventions as opposed to other variables operating in the schools. However, we cannot get away from the real complexity involved in variables influencing program outcomes. Ultimately, we can be most confident of the more discrete findings which evolve from examining individual program components within given sites.

We should not expect to replicate similar evaluation efforts throughout the state, nor can we constantly be orchestrating evaluation plans around everything ongoing related to inservice. This would invariably entail too great a commitment of resources. A desirable objective is to include sensitivity to evaluation concerns as an integral part of each effort rather than as another consideration imposed upon inservice.

In addition, some of the primary evaluation questions lend themselves to evaluation as an incidental aspect to inservice delivery. For example, in the earlier discussion of needs assessment, we raised such questions

as the numbers of students receiving services, the number of qualified personnel available and needed, and so on. As we collect these same needs assessment data the following year, we are performing an important type of evaluation of the prior year's programs. If we narrow the gap between personnel available and personnel needed through retraining and upgrading of skills, our inservice efforts are indeed meeting a major program objective.

What we are advocating here is a general orientation toward documenting change. Just about everything we do in educational settings is purposeful and intended to produce some change in someone's knowledge or performance. Other provisions within P.L. 94-142, such as the required IEPs, are an example of a structured record-keeping system that has been integrated into the system. Additional data-based procedures can be integrated into inservice as needed. Attention to the existing sources of data for documenting change in school settings may even prove to suffice for most evaluation purposes.

As the school itself becomes more open to observation and participation by inservice trainees, there will be added opportunities for evaluation. Individuals observing for training purposes can record evaluation data that simultaneously alerts them to the relevant qualities of the skills being observed.

Responsibility for inservice evaluation falls to the agency or agencies involved in planning the program. Questions pertaining to the overall adequacy of the statewide program, such as the degree to which state needs for personnel training are being met, must necessarily be evaluated at the state level. Questions concerning the consequences of a particular

inservice program within an LEA or a specific school are appropriately handled at that level. In either situation, the data are retrieved at the local level.

The State Education Agency can compile and analyze such locally generated data to assess inservice statewide. However, data gathered at independent sites can only be considered comparable and grouped for analysis if they are highly objective and derived from the same procedures and instruments. Assuring uniformity in evaluation data from diverse sites will require coordination at the SEA level. This coordination may vary from imposing an evaluation approach to specifying a reporting form for data transmittal.

Under the commonly anticipated circumstances where IHE and LEA staff cooperate in implementing a particular inservice program, the evaluation targets and plans should similarly reflect a joint effort. Stating in advance the consequences or changes expected from a particular inservice experience will identify the basis on which to evaluate its effectiveness. Ultimately, however, the overall inservice efforts at any particular site should have long-term payoffs visible in attitude and performance change among the personnel involved. Such indices as personnel coming independently to look for inservice opportunities would provide support for our long-term and more abstract inservice goals by showing that the individuals are recognizing the values of inservice and are effectively motivated to seek it.

Maintaining Continuity in Inservice

The overlapping and ongoing nature

of the the components of inservice can provide the continuity necessary to make a statewide program truly comprehensive. Inservice as presently handled may be considered comprehensive in the sense that it occurs frequently, and reaches large numbers of participants. However, such inservice tends to be comprised of independent efforts with little coordination and less continuity. Without coordinated planning and interaction, inservice will fail to achieve the comprehensiveness in scope and consequences intended by P.L. 94-142.

It is the very continuity intrinsic

to inservice components which constitutes follow-up activities. Evaluation efforts designed to assess the impact of inservice experiences on personnel and/or pupils represent directive follow-up in the sense that they provide feedback on the need for additional, alternative, or modified inservice. Similarly, periodic needs assessments constitute directive follow-up activities.

Inservice needs will unlikely ever be fulfilled. Rather, they will change, evolve, mature, or otherwise reflect the ongoing impact of the inservice we provide.